

## **Word in Song: Shine**

Rev. Cameron D St. Michael – February 15 2026

Transfiguration Sunday

**Readings:** Exodus 24:12-18; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9 CEB

**Reflection:** Psalm 18

**Call to Worship:** Arise! Shine! The light of the Lord has come! His glory has shone upon you! Though darkness covers the earth, the Lord will shine upon you. Though gloom may cover the nations, God's glory will appear over you. Nations will come to God's light and kings to his dawning radiance! (Isaiah 60)

**Prayer:** O God, may we learn from you wherever we may be. Reveal to us the word that you have for us this day. May you help us to see you with us anywhere and everywhere so that we are reminded of your steadfast love and faithfulness wherever we may go. We give thanks for your abiding presence that is with us always. May you pour out your Holy Spirit on us that we may be guided by your sure and steady hand in all that we are and all that we do. May we continue to grow in wisdom as we continually seek to live by your love. Help us to build community in your name and to welcome people by your love. May your word be a song that we sing in our hearts as we celebrate your love in our lives. And may you guide us and lead us by your unending grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Reflection:** Psalm 18

*<sup>25</sup> You deal faithfully with the faithful; you show integrity toward the one who has integrity.*

*<sup>26</sup> You are pure toward the pure, but toward the crooked, you are tricky. <sup>27</sup> You are the one who saves people who suffer and brings down those with proud eyes. <sup>28</sup> You are the one who lights my lamp— the Lord my God illumines my darkness. <sup>29</sup> With you I can charge into battle; with my God I can leap over a wall. <sup>30</sup> God! His way is perfect; the Lord's word is tried and true. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 18:25-30 CEB+)*

We read the words of Psalm 18, and we hear of God as the one who lights our lamp. That the Lord brings his love and lets it shine in our darkness. That we know God's way is perfect and a refuge for those who seek him. We are to be a light to one another, our lamps shining the way of goodness and mercy. How can you lead others to Christ this week? Who can you lift up in your prayers? How can you help a neighbor in the week to come? How can you show kindness in a world full of difficulty? How can you share the love of God with others in this new year?

**Prayer:** Gracious God, we turn to you in prayer, knowing that you are always more ready to hear than we are to speak. We come before you to seek your grace and your blessing in our lives. We give you thanks for the joys that we have, both the joys that we have in our personal lives and the joys that we lift up together as a community. We raise them all to you with thankful hearts. We also come to you with our concerns, both those that we name together and the concerns that we only speak in our hearts. But we know that when we share them with you, Lord, that you listen to our every worry. We pray that you will be with us and comfort us in our difficulties. We pray that you will rejoice with us in our celebrations. For we know that you are

with us in all things. You are there for us in the happy and the sad. You are there for us in the confusion and the unknown. Because your steadfast love and faithfulness are always with us. We pray you will continue to bless us in our sorrow and our joy. That you will guide us in our triumphs and our tragedies. May you always give us a new song that we may sing of your guiding hand. And may you continue to walk with us all the days of our lives. All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior, and our friend. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

### **Sermon:**

Our scripture readings for today come from the Common English Bible. Our first reading is from Exodus chapter 24, verse 12 through 18.

*<sup>12</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there. I'll give you the stone tablets with the instructions and the commandments that I've written in order to teach them." <sup>13</sup> So Moses and his assistant Joshua got up, and Moses went up God's mountain. <sup>14</sup> Moses had said to the elders, "Wait for us here until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur will be here with you. Whoever has a legal dispute may go to them." <sup>15</sup> Then Moses went up the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup> The Lord's glorious presence settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from the cloud. <sup>17</sup> To the Israelites, the Lord's glorious presence looked like a blazing fire on top of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Moses entered the cloud and went up the mountain. Moses stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. (Exodus 24:12-18 CEB+)*

Our second reading is from 2 Peter chapter 1, verses 16 through 21.

*<sup>16</sup> We didn't repeat crafty myths when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Quite the contrary, we witnessed his majesty with our own eyes. <sup>17</sup> He received honor and glory from God the Father when a voice came to him from the magnificent glory, saying, "This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am well-pleased." <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup> In addition, we have a most reliable prophetic word, and you would do well to pay attention to it, just as you would to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> Most important, you must know that no prophecy of scripture represents the prophet's own understanding of things, <sup>21</sup> because no prophecy ever came by human will. Instead, men and women led by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:16-21 CEB+)*

Our final reading is from Matthew chapter 17, verses 1 through 9.

*<sup>17</sup> Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them to the top of a very high mountain. <sup>2</sup> He was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. <sup>3</sup> Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus. <sup>4</sup> Peter reacted to all of this by saying to Jesus, "Lord, it's good that we're here.*

*If you want, I'll make three shrines: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, look, a bright cloud overshadowed them. A voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son whom I dearly love. I am very pleased with him. Listen to him!”<sup>6</sup> Hearing this, the disciples fell on their faces, filled with awe.<sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.”<sup>8</sup> When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Don’t tell anybody about the vision until the Human One is raised from the dead.”  
(Matthew 17:1-9 CEB+)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

The special music for today is “Shine” by Collective Soul, performed by Pastor Cam. These are the lyrics as sung.

*Give me a word, Give me a sign, Show me where to look, Tell me, what will I find? What will I find? Lay me on the ground, Fly me in the sky, Show me where to look, Tell me, what will I find? What will I find?*

*Yeah! (x3) Whoa! Heaven let your light shine down (x4)*

*Love is in the water, Love is in the air, Show me where to look, Tell me, will love be there? Will love be there? Teach me how to speak, Teach me how to share, Teach me where to go, Tell me, will love be there? Will love be there?*

*Yeah! (x3) Whoa! Heaven let your light shine down (x4)*

*I'm gonna let it shine, I'm gonna let it shine, Heaven's little light is gonna shine on me. I said hey, hey, Heaven's little light is gonna shine on me. I said shine, Come on and shine.*

This Transfiguration Sunday, I decided to use the song “Shine” by Collective Soul, because I think it helps to encapsulate the feeling that comes with the Transfiguration. This idea of heaven's light shining down and the love and the joy that it should instill in us, with the transformation that we see when we are transformed in the love of Christ. I wanted to do this because Transfiguration, I think, is an interesting event that can be confusing, and there's many ways to explore it. This year, I wanted to explore the idea of God's presence being a light to the people, and how we see that in our different readings for today.

The overall main story of Transfiguration is Jesus being changed, transfigured on the mountaintop. He's there with Moses and Elijah, and he's transformed in front of Peter, James, and John. His face shines like the sun, his clothes become dazzling white, and he becomes this vision of light and love. And the reason I wanted to pair it with the song for today is because the song is full of questions, and Transfiguration has always been an event that left me with a lot of questions. Because even the ending of the story of Transfiguration is that they shouldn't tell anybody. It's a brief moment, with the entire event happening within our reading from Matthew. It is a fleeting vision that they have. The words of our song have a lot of questions too. This is part of what made me think of the Transfiguration when I listened to the song. It was that opening verse, “give me a word, give me a sign, show me where to look, and tell me what will I find?” I could relate to that because when I look at the Transfiguration, sometimes I'm asking

what it is I'm looking for. What is the importance of seeing Moses and Elijah here with Jesus glowing with God's light? It made me look at the way that we see this event.

One of the ways we can look at it is this glory of God, this glorious presence burning like a bright fire. That's the what we have in this vision of Moses, one of the three people in the Transfiguration, going up to talk to God. A cloud covers the mountain, and God's presence rests on it, and it looks like blazing fire, this bright and glorious light. Moses is transformed through his interactions with God, to where Moses himself, his face shines. It made me think about what God's presence is like, a bright and shining light, a fire burning to instill this kind of awe. I once again thought about our song, "heaven let your light shine down." That when we look for God's light, we are looking for it as a guide and a beacon, especially in this dark world that we live in. Because it seems like every day there's something else that should be dividing us. There is something else that should be pushing us apart. We get something else to drive a wedge between us. But in our readings, we hear about this glorious light that draws people in. It pulls people together. It is comfort.

It's out of this light that we hear the words that we have from 2 Peter. 2 Peter is quoting the events of the Transfiguration. It's about the way that Peter is recalling the way that we turn to God. That he saw God's glory there on the mountain. He heard the voice speak to them, "This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am well-pleased." He saw Christ shining like a lamp, as if to gather the people from the darkness. And he compares the words that they speak to that idea of a lamp. That the words that we speak about Christ are like a lamp shining in a dark place. Because those words highlight the way that we trust one another, and the way that we trust Christ to get us to where we need us to be. The way that we trust that God's love is enough. And it was another one of the things that I heard in the lyrics for the song over and over, when thinking about this idea of shining bright in Christ's presence. When thinking about Christ uniting the law and the prophets together in this one glorious moment, bringing a light to a world of darkness. We get that simple plea, "heaven let your light shine down." One of the things that we ask in that song is, "will love be there?" Because we want to see love shining through. We want to see love breaking through. We want that light to shine.

I think it's one of the things that we see in the Transfiguration. There's a lot going on that I could be talking about in this small space, but I wanted to talk about this idea of the light, because it comes up a lot in Scripture. A light in the darkness. A light to the people. We hear it again and again with the way that we view the light overcoming the darkness, the way the light draws us in. As we move into Lent, I really wanted to continue to think about the light in this way. The way that we help it to shine when we reflect those things that we see in Christ that we want to see in the world. Because I think what we see when we see him transfigured is his goodness shining through above all else. Because when he unites the law and the prophets, he's reminding us that the two most important commandments are to love your neighbor, and to love God. That we are drawn together to share that with one another, to be united in faith and in hope.

That when we seek to let our light shine, it's because we want to share the love of Christ and help others to come out of the darkness. Because we'll be looking at that darkness throughout Lent, and I wanted us to be able to think about how we can shine in that darkness. Over the next few weeks of Lent, we'll be learning to let go. Letting go of temptation, entitlement, division, presumptions, and doubt. All of the things that can hide our light. All of the

things that draw us away from a life in Christ. But when we let our light shine, we don't let anything stand in the way because we think of Christ transformed. Because he transforms our lives, and his light shines in our hearts. Because I can remember times that someone else has been a light to me, and I don't know what I would have done without that shining presence. Because even if it's only a little bit of light, a little bit of light is visible from a long way away when you are in darkness.

That was part of why I picked the song that we have for today. Because I want heaven's light to shine down on me. Because I'm going to let it shine. I want heaven to let its light shine down. I want to find love and to share it. I want Christ to teach me how to speak, and to teach me how to share, and to teach me where to go, and I want to trust that love will be there. That in all that I am, and in all that I do, I can let the song in my heart be a song that sings of Christ's love and mercy and forgiveness. So that when I think of the love of Christ in my life, that I may speak of hope, of dreams, of unity, of compassion, and that I may lift up others. That they may see the light of Christ, God's great brilliance. That we can all cry out for heaven's light to come on and shine. Amen.

**Offering:** If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Dismissal with Blessing:** May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Our Next Series – Let It Go

Our series for Lent is all about what we can give up as we follow Christ. “Let It Go” starts with an introduction on Ash Wednesday and then goes through the different things we can let go of. We explore the idea of giving things up for Lent as we explore how we can let go of temptation, entitlement, division, presumptions, and doubt. Let us work together to let go of worldly desires as we walk towards the cross.

2/18: Learning to Let Go	2/22: Temptation	3/1: Entitlement
3/8: Division	3/15: Presumptions	3/22: Doubt

### Neoga Grace UMC

752 Walnut  
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Worship 10:30am

### Toledo UMC

Madison & Ohio St  
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Worship 8:15am

### Etna UMC

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